

# LAHOMA

By JOHN  
BRECKENRIDGE  
ELLIS

Copyright, 1913, by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

## CHAPTER XX.

### Gledware's Possessions.

**R**ED FEATHER'S mind was not constituted to entertain more than one leading thought at a time. Ever since the desertion and death of his daughter he had been his dominant passion. It was in order to find Gledware that he had haunted the trail during the years of Lahoma's youth, always hoping to discover him in the new country—gilding behind herds of cattle, listening to scraps of talks among the cattlemen, earning from Mizoo the uneasy designation, "the ghost."

Thanks to the reading aloud of Lahoma's letter, he had learned of Gledware's presence in the city which he had known years before as Westport Landing. He went thither unbewildered by its marvelous changes, undistracted by its tumultuous flood of life—for his mind was full of his mission. He could see only the blood following the blade of his knife, heard nothing but a groan, a death rattle.

Gledware's presence in the boat this morning had been made possible only by the interposition of Lahoma. But for the Indian's deep seated affection for her, whom he regarded as a child, the man now smiling into Annabel's pale face would long ago have found his final resting place. It was due to the Indian's singleness of thought that Lahoma's plan had struck him as good. Gledware, stripped of all his possessions, sinking as a beggar from door to door, no roof, no bed but sky and earth—that is what Red Feather had meant.

He had believed Gledware glad of the respite. That he should accept the alternative seemed reasonable. There was a choice only between death and poverty—and Gledware wished to live so desperately, so basely! The chief cared little for life. Still, he would unhesitatingly have preferred the most meager existence to a knife in his heart. How much more, then, this craven white man! But the plan had failed because Gledware did not believe death was the other alternative. Never in the remotest way had it occurred to the avenger that Gledware could be spared should he prove false to his oath. Red Feather was less a man with passions than a cold, relentless fate. This fate would surely overcome the helpless wretch should he cling to his riches.

As Red Feather skimmed the water with long sweeps of his oars, never looking back, the voices of his passengers came to his ears without meaning. He was thinking of the last few days and how this morning's ride was their fitting sequel. The early sunbeams were full on him as he tilted back his head, but they showed no emotion on his face, hard set and dully red in the clear radiance.

Crouching near the summer house at Gledware's place, he had overheard Red Kimball, boast to bring Gledware the pearl and onyx pin. Then had shot through his darkened mind the suspicion that Gledware meant to escape the one condition on which his life was to be spared. With simple cunning he had left the pin where the outlaw must find it. His own death would be taken for granted. What then?

What then? This ride in the boat, Gledware had made his choice; he had clung to his possessions, and now death held the oars. He was scarcely past middle age. He might have lived so long, he who so loved to live! But, no, he had chosen to be rich—and to die.

When Red Feather brought his mind back to the present Gledware was describing to Annabel a ranch in California for which he had traded the house near Independence. He would take her far away; he would build a house thus and thus—rooms so, terraces here, marble pillars.

Annabel listened gravely, silently, her face all the paler for the sunlight flashing over it, for the mimic sun on the waves glancing up into her pensive eyes. Somehow the sunshine, the ripple of the water seemed to form no part of her life, belonged, rather, to Edgerton Compton, rowing in solitude against the sky. Those naked trees, bare, brown hills and ledges of huge stones seemed her world boundaries, kin to her, claiming her—But there was California and the splendid house to be built.

The Indian was listening now, but as he heard projected details glowingly presented no change came in his grin, deep lined face. He simply knew it was not to be. Let the fool plan!

"Beautiful one," he heard Gledware say, speaking in an altered tone, "all that is in the future—but see what I have brought you. This is for today. It's yours, dear. Let me see it around your neck with the sun full upon it."

Red Feather turned his head, curiously.

Gledware held outstretched a magnificent diamond necklace which shot forth dazzling rays as it swung from his eager fingers.

Annabel uttered a smothered cry of delight as the iridescence filled her eyes. She looked across the water toward the pagoda shaped clubhouse, where her mother stood, faintly defined as a speck of white against the green wall shingles of the piazza. It seemed that it needed this glance to steady her nerves. Edgerton was forgotten. She reached out her hand. And then, perplexed at the necklace being suddenly withdrawn, she looked up. She caught a glimpse of Gledware's face and her blood turned cold. That face was frozen in horror. At the turning of the boatman's head he had instantly recognized under the huge brimmed hat, the face of his enemy as if brought back from the grave. Gledware ceased breathing, then his form quivered with a sudden rush of breath as of a man emerging from diving. His eyes rolled in his head as he turned about scanning the shore, glancing at Edgerton's distant boat. Why had he come unarmed? How could he have put faith in Red Kimball's assurances? He tortured his brain for some gleam of hope.

"This is all I have," he shrieked, as if the Indian's foot was already upon his neck. "This is all I have." He flung the necklace into the water. "It was a lie about all my property. I've got nothing. Annabel, I sold the last bit to get you the necklace, but I shouldn't have done that. Now it's gone. I have nothing!"

The Indian rose slowly. The oars slipped down and floated away in the flashing stream of the sun's rays.

Annabel, realizing that the Indian, despite his impassive countenance, threatened some horrible catastrophe, started up with a scream. Edgerton had already turned toward them, alarmed at sound of Gledware's terror. He bent to the oars, comprehending only that Annabel was in danger.

"Edgerton!" she shrieked blindly.

"Edgerton! Edgerton! Edgerton!" Gledware crouched at her feet, crying beseechingly: "I swear I have nothing—nothing! I sold everything—gave it away—left it—nothing in all the world! I'm willing to beg, to starve! I don't want to own anything! I only want to live—to live—my God, to live!"

Red Feather did not utter a word, but with the stealthy lightness and lissiteness of a panther he stepped over the seat and moved toward Gledware.

Then Gledware, pushed to the last extremity, despairing of the interposition of some miraculous chance, was forced back upon himself. With the vision of an inherent coward he saw all chances against him. But with the desperation of a maddened soul he threw himself upon the defensive.

Red Feather had not expected to see him offer resistance. This show of clinched teeth and doubled fists suddenly enraged him, and the old lust of vengeance flamed from his eyes. Hat and disguising coat were cast aside. For a moment his form, rigid and erect, gleamed like a statue of copper cut in stern, relentless lines, and the single crimson feather in his raven locks matched in gold the silver brightness of his upraised blade.

The next moment his form shot forward, his arm gripped Gledware about the neck despite furious resistance, and both men fell into the water.

The violent shock given to the boat sent Annabel to her knees. Clutching the side, she gazed with horrified eyes at the water in her wake. The men had disappeared, but in the glowing white path cut across the lake by the sun appeared a dull red streak that thinned away to faint purple and dim pink. She watched the sinister discoloration with fascinated eyes. What was taking place beneath the smooth tide? Or was it all over? Had Red Feather found a rock to which he could cling while he drowned himself with his victim? Or had their bodies



His Arm Gripped Gledware About the Neck.

been caught in the tangled branches of a submerged forest tree? It was one of the mysteries of the Ozarks never to be solved.

She was still kneeling, still staring with frightened eyes, still wondering when Edgerton Compton rowed up beside her.

"He said he had nothing," she stammered as he helped her to rise. "He said he had nothing. How true it is!" Edgerton gently lifted her to his skiff, then stepped in beside her. He, too, was watching the water for the possible emergence of a ghastly face.

Annabel began trembling as with the ague. "Edgerton! He said it was all a lie—about his property—and so it was. Everything is a lie except—this."

She clung to him.

When Bill Atkins with an air of impenetrable mystery invited Wilfred Compton to a ride that might keep him from his bride several days the young man guessed that Wilfred had been found. Lahoma, divining as much, urged Wilfred to hasten, assured him that she enjoyed the publicity and stirring life of the Mangum hotel and expressed confidence that should she need a friend Mizoo would help her through any difficulty. So Wilfred rode away with Bill, and Willock was not mentioned.

Bill was evidently in deep trouble, and when Wilfred and he had let themselves down into the stone corridor, whose only entrance was a crevice in the mountain top, he understood the old trapper's deep despondency—Brick Willock was there, and Brick declared his intention of giving himself up. He announced his purpose before greetings had subsided. Bill called him an old fool, used unpruned language, scolded rather than argued. Wilfred, on the other hand, delayed events by requesting full particulars of the last few weeks.

"He's told me all he's been up to," Bill objected; "there's no call to travel over that ground again. What I brought you here for, Wilfred, is to show him how foolish he'd be to let himself be taken when he's free as the wind."

"I tell you, declared Brick, "and then as has heard it once can take it or leave it." He was discursive, circumstantial, and it was a long time before he led them in fancy to the door of the boathouse and showed them Red Feather and Gledware disappearing forever beneath the surface of the lake.

"There I waited," he said, "expecting first one head, then the other, to come to light, but nothing happened. Seemed like I couldn't move. But Edgerton began rowing towards me with Annabel, she happy despite herself, and when I see it wouldn't do to tarry no longer I cut loose the old deaf boatman and unstops his mouth. Well, sir, he lets out a yell that would 'a' done credit to a bobcat fighting in the traps. I had to run for it. Fellows from the clubhouse took after me thinking I'd been murdering somebody. I skinned them Ozark hills, and I skinned myself. But Brick he says, 'When you turns loose a bobcat expect scratches,' says he."

"Don't tell about how you hid in the hills waiting for a night train," Bill pleaded.

"I tell it all," Brick was inflexible. "You are here, I'm here, and it's a safe place. We may never be so put again."

"A safe place," Bill snarled. "Yes, it is a safe place. But you've lost your nerve. Was a time when you'd have stood out creation in a hole like this. But you've turned to salt, you have a regular Bible character—giving up to the law, letting them clap you in jail, getting yourself hanged, very likely! And all because you've lost your nerve. See here, Brick, stand 'em out! I'll steady you through thick and thin. I'll bring you grub and water."

"You couldn't do nothing," Brick returned contemptuously. "You're too old. As for that, I ain't come to the pass of needing being waited on, I guess. It ain't dangers that subdues me. It's principles. Look here!"

He walked to the crossbar that was set in the walls to guard the floor from the unknown abyss. "I found out they was a hole in the rock just about five feet under the floor. I can take this rope and tie one end to the post and let myself down to that little room where there's grub enough to last a long while, where there's bedding and common luxuries, as tobacco and the like. I ain't been smoked out. Into the open I goes, free and disposed and my hands held up according."

When he had finished the last morsel of his story and had warmed some of it over for another taste there came an ominous silence, broken at last by the querulous voice of Bill, arguing against surrender.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### "Lahoma of Oklahoma."

**W**ILLOCK waited in patience till Bill Atkins had exhausted himself. "I ain't saying nothing," he explained to Wilfred, "because he ain't pensive to reason and it does him good to get that out of his system."

"Let me make a suggestion," exclaimed Wilfred suddenly.

Willock looked at him suspiciously. "If it ain't counter to my plans"—"It isn't. It's this: Suppose we drop the subject till tomorrow. It won't hurt any of us to sleep on it, and I know I'd enjoy another night with you, as in the old days."

"I'm willing to sleep on it out of friendship," Willock conceded unwillingly, "though I'd rest easier on a bed in the jail. There never was no bird more crazy to get into a cage than I am to be shut up. But as to the old days, they ain't none left. Them deputies is in the dugout; they're in the cabin I built for Lahoma; they think they owns our cave. Well, they's no place left for me. Life wouldn't be nothing crouching and slinking up here in the rocks. Life wouldn't be nothing to me without Lahoma. I'd have a pretty chance for happiness now,

wouldn't I, sitting up somewhere with Bill Atkins? I ain't saying I mightn't get out of this country and find a safe spot where I could live free and disposed with an old renegade like him that nobody ain't after and ain't a-caring whether he's above ground or in kingdom come. But I couldn't be with Lahoma. I'm under ban."

"If you were on my farm near Oklahoma City," Wilfred suggested, "and Lahoma and I lived in the city you could often see her. Up there nobody'd molest you, nobody'd know you. That's what I've been planning. You could look after the farm, and Bill could go back and forth. As soon as the news comes that Red Feather killed Gledware it'll be taken for granted that he killed Red Kimball and attacked the stage. You'll be cleared of all that, and nobody will want you arrested."

Willock rose. "Are we going to sleep on this or shall I answer you now?" he demanded fixedly.

Wilfred hastily asked for time. They passed the night in the mountain top. But Willock had spoken truly—there were no old days. The one subject forbidden was the only subject in their minds. All attempts at reminiscence, at irrelevant anecdotes, were mere pretense. The fact that Wilfred and Lahoma were now married seemed to banish events of a month ago as if they were years and years in the past.

The next morning they had breakfast in the gray dawn and departed for the town. Brick Willock was determined to yield himself to the power of the law. Lahoma had gone out of his life, and he cared little as to what happened to him.

In oppressive silence they skirted Turtle hill and emerged from the horseshoe bend, finding in a sheltered nook the three ponies that Wilfred had provided at nightfall. He had hoped to the last that Willock could be prevailed on to alter his decision, and even while riding away toward Mangum he argued and coaxed. But it was in vain, and as they clattered up to the hotel veranda Willock was searching the crowd for a glimpse of the sheriff.

The street was unusually full for that time of night. Some topic of engrossing interest seemed to engage all minds until Willock's figure was recognized; then, indeed, he held the center of attention. Men gathered eagerly, curiously, but without the hostility they would have displayed had not a message regarding Red Feather reached the town. Brick was still an outlaw, to be sure, but whatever crimes he had committed were unknown, hence unable to react on the imagination. The surviving friend of Red Kimball, giving up his efforts against Willock on the liberation of Bill, had left the country, harmless without his lender.

Conversation which had been loud and excited, eager calls from street corners that had punctuated the many tongued argument and exposition, dimmed to silence. There was a forward movement of the men, not a rush, but a vibratory swell of the human tide pushing toward the steps of the hotel. The two riderless horses danced sideways. Brick Willock had jumped upon the unpainted floor of the veranda, and Wilfred had sprung lightly to his side.

"I'll just keep on my horse," muttered Ed Bill, resting one leg stiffly over the pommel. "I can't get up as I used to, and I expect to stay with ye, Brick, to the jail door."

Willock did not turn his shaggy head to answer. He had seen the sheriff at the other end of the piazza, and he made straight for him, not even condescending to a grin when the other, mistaking his intentions, whipped out his revolver.

"Put it up, pard," Brick said gruffly. "When you come to me in the cave a few years ago I give you a warm welcome, but now I ain't a-coming to you, I'm a-coming to the law. Where's that there warrant?"

The crowd that had been listening to the sheriff's discourse before the arrival of the highwayman scattered at sight of the drawn weapon, all except Lahoma.

"Brick!" she cried. "Oh, Brick, Brick!"

There was something in her voice he could not understand, but he dared not turn to examine her face. He could not trust himself if he once looked at her.

"Get out your warrant," he cried savagely, "and get it out quick if you want me!" His great breast heaved with the conflict of powerful emotions.

"I'm sure sorry to see you, old man," Mizoo declared. "We know Red Feather done what we was charging up against you, but I guess there's no other course open to me. As my aunt used to say (Miss Sue of Missouri) 'I got a duty—do it I must.' He thrust his hairy hand into his bosom and drew forth the fateful paper.

Lahoma laughed. "Read it, Mizoo; read it aloud—read all of it!" she cried gleefully.

Wilfred looked at her, bewildered. The crowd stared also, knowing her love for Brick, therefore dazed at the sound of mirthful music. Brick turned his head at last. He looked also, not reproachfully, but with a question in his hard, stern eyes.

Mizoo turned red. "Well, yes, I'll read it," he said defiantly. "Sure! I guess as sheriff of Greer county I'll make shift to get through with it alive."

He began to read slowly, doggedly, Brick, without movement save for that heaving of his bosom, facing him with a mingling on his face of supreme defiance for the reader and superstitious awe for the legal instrument.

"That's all," Mizoo at last announced. "You'll have to come with me, Willock."

"Hold on!" came voices from the

crowd. During the reading they had been watching Lahoma, and her expression promised more than fruitless laughter. "Hold on, Mizoo! Lahoma's got something up her sleeve!"

Lahoma spoke clearly, that her voice might carry to the confines of the crowd: "Mizoo, I think you read in that warrant 'county of Greer, state of Texas.' Didn't you?"

"That's what I done. Here's the words."

"But, you see," returned Lahoma, "that warrant's no good!"

Mizoo stared at her a moment, then exclaimed violently, "By"—Propriety forbade the completion of his phrase.

The crowd instantly caught her meaning; a shout rose, shrill, tumultuous, broken with laughter. She had reminded them of the subject which a short time ago had engaged all minds.

"It's no good," cried Lahoma triumphantly. She took it from Mizoo's lax fingers and deliberately tore it from top to bottom.

"I guess I'm a-getting old, sure enough," said Bill. "This is beyond me."

Wilfred looked at Lahoma questioningly. Brick, stupefied by violence done that sacred instrument of civilization, stood rooted to the spot.

Mizoo was grinning now. "You see," he explained, "word come today that the supreme court has at last turned in its decision. Prairie Dog Fork is now Red River, and 'Red River' is only the North Fork of Red River—and that means that Greer county don't belong to Texas and never did belong to her, but is a part of Oklahoma."

"And you'll never have an Oklahoma writ served on you," cried Lahoma, "not while I'm living! And you'll go with us to our farm and live with us, you and Bill and I!"

Lahoma had expected to be very calm and logical, for she knew she had all the advantage on her side. But when she saw the change in Brick's eyes she forgot her rights; she forgot all that watching crowd; she forgot even Wilfred, and with a spring she was in Brick's arms, sobbing for joy.

He tried to say something about her Boston kin, but he could not express the thought coherently, for, giant as he was, he was sobbing too.

"If there's ever a meeting," she said between tears and laughter, "the east will have to come to the west."

"Those Boston folks," cried Bill, with a sudden upheaval of unwonted humor, "can simply go to—beans! I'm a-getting down," he added, cautiously lowering himself from his pony. "I guess I'm in this too."

"You're in it," growled Brick, "but you're on the outskirts. Don't come no nearer." He stroked the head that rested on his breast, his great hand moving with exceeding gentleness. He gazed over her brown glory at the sympathetic crowd.

"Fellows," he cried, "just look what I've raised!"

"Boys," exclaimed Mizoo, "what do you say? Let's give three cheers for Lahoma!"

Wilfred's voice cut across the last word, proud and happy. "Make it Lahoma of Oklahoma!"

THE END.



A PARISIAN CREATION.

A stunning evening gown is shown of black silk net with jet embroidered trimmings. The skirt, finished with a wide band of jet embroidery, is topped with a double tunic, one finished with a satin binding the same length as the drop skirt, and another uneven in length is finished with jet ball fringe. The bodice of embroidered jet is extremely décolleté, but veiled with the silk net and finished at the neck with velvet ribbon and tiny rosebuds. Long sleeves, too, are a feature of this striking affair.

Subscribe Today

## L. C. TAUL

Insurance Office

Cloverport, Kentucky

Fire, Lightning Tor-  
nado and Windstorm,  
Life, Accident, Health  
Insurance.

Old Reliable Companies

Henry Trent J. W. Trent P. L. Davis

## Hardinsburg Livery

Livery, Feed and  
Sale Stable

Hardinsburg, : Ky.

## Dr. R. P. Kunnecke

Veterinary Surgeon

Office Trent & Walls' Livery Stable.

Prepared to Treat all Animal Diseases

Special Attention Given to  
Calls at all hours

DR. R. P. KUNNECKE, V. M. D.  
Hardinsburg, Ky.

## M. E. CHURCH, South

SUNDAY SCHOOL,

HARDINSBURG, KY.

Opens at 9:30 a. m. each Sunday.

All visitors and strangers are cordi-  
ally invited to attend.

M. D. DEARD, Superintendent,  
Dr. W. A. WALKER, Secretary

**FURS**

HIGHEST PRICES PAID  
Remittance Mailed on Day  
Shipment is Received  
No Commission to Pay  
Write for Price List and  
Shipping Tags  
**M. Sabel & Sons**  
Incorporated Established 1856  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

## All About the Legislature

### The State Journal

Of Frankfort, Six Issues per Week.

Only Daily Paper at the State Capital.

From Now Until April  
1, 1916 For 50 Cents

Less Than 5 Cents a Week

No other paper will have as large a staff of reporters as The State Journal to cover the present session. If you want to keep posted on all features of news at the State Capital this is your chance.

Keep in touch with State politics and see what your Representatives are doing.

Send all Subscriptions to

The Breckenridge News  
Cloverport, Ky.

### Notice.

Advertising of every nature, such as colt show ads., ads. for money-making entertainments for schools and churches, are charged for at our regular rates.

JOHN D. BABBAGE.

Try our Want or For Sale  
column for quick results.